



CITY OF BOSTON  
Thomas M. Menino  
MAYOR

# GREEN OPTIONS: FLOORING

## NATURAL LINOLEUM

**Made from linseed oil, wood flour, pine resin, and pigments with a plant fiber backing.**

**Green benefits:** Can last between 30-40 years; biodegradable; renewable ingredients; easy to maintain; and naturally anti-static and anti-microbial.

**Additional Info:** Recommended for kitchen, bathroom, and living room.

**Tip:** Linoleum tiles are a good do-it-yourself project; professional installation is recommended with linoleum sheet. For small areas, look for linoleum remnants, often available through flooring retailers. Look for "natural linoleum." Vinyl flooring may be generically called "linoleum."

## CORK

**Renewable resource from the bark of the cork oak tree, grown in the Mediterranean region.**

**Green benefits:** Natural properties make it inherently fire retardant; resistant to extreme temperature changes; hypoallergenic; insect resistant; and has a natural resilience and warmth.

**Additional Info:** Recommended for kitchen and family room.

**Tip:** Consult with flooring professional regarding placing cork in areas of occasional moisture, such as near sinks and food preparation areas. Look for factory-finished products, or seal with a low-toxic, low-volatile organic compounds (VOC) or plant-based wax sealer to reduce indoor air quality impacts.

## RECLAIMED OR CERTIFIED WOOD

**Look for hardwood flooring from an environmentally responsible use of existing resources such as reclaimed or salvaged wood.**

**Green benefits:** Reclaimed or salvaged wood flooring comes from either re-sawn salvaged lumber, logs reclaimed from river bottoms, or urban salvage; certified wood by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) ([www.fscus.org](http://www.fscus.org)) signifies responsible harvesting and processing.

**Additional Info:** Recommended for bedroom, living room, family room, dining room, and stairs.

**Tip:** Look for regional sources of both reclaimed and certified sustainable harvest wood. Finish wood with a water-based or plant-based (e.g., products with linseed oil, beeswax etc.) product, or order it factory finished.

## BAMBOO

**Renewable resource. Is a fast growing grass which can be selectively harvested annually.**

**Green benefits:** Fast-growing, rapidly renewable resource; natural & durable alternative to hardwood; comparable in strength and much more stable with 50% less contraction & expansion; doesn't need to be stained or painted but must be sealed.

**Additional Info:** Recommended for bedroom, living room, family room, dining room, kitchen, and entryway.

**Tip:** Look for low VOC finishes that won't harm air quality. Ask a professional about placing bamboo in areas of moisture. Look for bamboo planks that are solid bamboo, rather than those with a wood core.

## RECYCLED CONTENT TILE

**Durable material, often with recycled content.**

**Green benefits:** Ultra-durable, easy to clean ceramic tiles are even greener when they contain recycled materials; available with more than 50% recycled glass; tile with re-ground ceramic or feldspar tailings (a by product of mining) are also available.

**Additional Info:** Recommended for kitchen, bathroom, entryway, and fireplace.

**Tip:** Look for local sources. With 100% recycled glass, consider the possible slip hazard. Some professionals suggest limiting all-glass tiles to accent pieces in floor applications, or increasing the grout area by using smaller tiles. The downside of more grout area, however, is increased cleaning. Also, smaller tiles usually cost more per square foot than larger tiles.

## STONE

**Natural occurring resource available includes granite, marble and slate.**

**Green benefits:** Durable, easy to clean, and reusable.

**Additional Info:** Recommended for kitchen, bathroom, entryway, and fireplace.

**Tip:** Look for locally mined and fabricated stone. Look for stone that does not necessarily need to be sealed. If it needs to be sealed use non toxic water based sealers and treatments.

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## SEALED CONCRETE

***Simple mixture of cement, aggregate (often sand) and water. Durable and easy to clean.***

**Green benefits:** When left exposed can function as both the foundation slab and finished floor. Stained concrete interior floors are easy to maintain, can absorb, store and release heat, and can be aesthetically appealing. Fly ash, a by-product of coal burning, can replace a portion of the cement in a concrete mix, reducing the environmental impact of this energy-intensive product.

**Additional Info:** Recommended for kitchen, bathroom, and entryway.

**Tip:** Select natural, nontoxic pigments to color concrete rather than surface stains. Look for water-based, low-toxic sealers. If your kitchen remodel is part of a larger home remodel involving the heating system, a concrete floor can be outfitted with radiant in-floor heating, an efficient heating method that can combat one of the main misgivings of this type of floor: cold feet.

## CARPET

***“Green” carpets and area rugs are those made from natural fibers or having high-recycled content of synthetic fibers. Namely either natural fiber such as wool, plant fibers such as jute, sisal, sea grass, and/or coir, and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) from recycled plastics.***

**Green benefits:** Natural fiber- elastic, durable; stain-resistant; captures microbes before vacuumed; biodegradable. Plant fiber-low VOCs; lower offgassing of toxic chemicals, rapidly renewable. PET- recovered from recycled soda bottles; stain-resistant.

**Additional Info:** Recommended for formal areas, bedroom, and stairs

**Tip:** Look for The Carpet and Rug Institute’s ([www.carpet-rug.org](http://www.carpet-rug.org)) Green Label Plus certification. Area rugs and carpet tiles are preferable to broadloom (wall-to-wall) carpet because they are easy to keep clean and remove dust mites.

*Check our web site for updated information.*